

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

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USMISSION USUN

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FOSIF ROTA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7772

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SS, SP, MO, UN

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: SPANISH DISENCHANTMENT WITH KING HASSAN

SUMMARY: MFA DIRECTOR FOR NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS TOLD EMBOFF NOV 5 THAT GOS COULD NOT LEAVE SAHARA WITHOUT INSURING THAT ITS STRATEGIC INTERESTS, I.E., CANARY ISLANDS, IN NORTHWEST AFRICA WERE PROTECTED. IRREDUCTIBLE HOSTILITY OF HASSAN TOWARD SPAIN HAS GRADUALLY ERODED SPANISH PATIENCE, PARTICULARLY INASMUCH AS ALGERIA HAS NOW BECOME MAJOR TRADING PARTNER IN AFRICA AND IS "A LOT EASIER TO DEAL WITH". BILATERAL DEAL WITH MOROCCO IS OUT OF THE QUESTION BECAUSE OF RISK OF ENDANGERING FRIENDSHIP WITH ALGERIA WITHOUT OBTAINING CREDIBLE ASSURANCE BY AN UNSTABLE REGIME OF ITS SO-CALLED FRIENDSHIP WITH SPAIN. END SUMMARY

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1. MFA DIRECTOR FOR NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS TOLD EMBOFF

NOV 5 THAT SPAIN COULD NOT END ITS PRESENCE IN SPANISH SAHARA WITHOUT MAKING ARRANGEMENTS TO PROTECT SPAIN'S VITAL STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN THE AREA, NAMELY THE CANARY ISLANDS.

2. DIRECTOR SAID THAT PREVAILING ASSUMPTION THAT GOS HAD AN INTEREST IN PRESERVATION OF THE MONARCHY IN MOROCCO WAS UNFOUNDED. INDEED, HE SAID, A SUCCESSOR REGIME TO HASSAN II COULD BE NO WORSE THAN THE PRESENT REGIME IN ITS RELATIONS WITH SPAIN. THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD A HOST OF UNRESOLVED PROBLEMS TO SETTLE AND THEY SEEMED TO BE INCREASING RATHER THAN DECREASING. HE CLAIMED HASSAN HAD STATED PUBLICLY: "FIRST IFNI, AFTERWARDS THE SAHARA, THEN THE PRESIDIOS OF CEUTA AND MELILLA, AND LATER WHATEVER WE CAN". DIRECTOR TOOK THE LATTER INFERENCE TO MEAN THE CANARY ISLANDS. DIRECTOR SAID THAT HASSAN'S EXPANSIONIST POLICIES WERE THRUST UPON HIM BY THE OPPOSITION. IN MFA'S VIEW, HASSAN WAS VERY WEAK AND THE MILITARY COULD BE EXPECTED TO TRY TO OVERTHROW HIM AGAIN. LASTLY THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE SKEPTICISM IN SPANISH GOVT CIRCLES ABOUT THE ABILITY OF HASSAN TO LIVE UP TO ANY PROMISES.

3. BY CONTRAST, THE GOS, HE REPORTED, HAD VERY GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALGERIA WHICH HAS A STABLE POLITICAL SYSTEM. ONE-FOURTH OF SPANISH TRADE WITH ALL OF AFRICA IS NOW WITH ALGERIA. (VISITING ALGERIAN MIN OF THE INTERIOR, BEN AHMED, REPORTEDLY HELD MEETINGS WITH MINISTERS OF THREE SPANISH MILITARY SERVICES DURING HIS TWO-DAY STAY OCT 30-31.)

4. MFA POSITION, THEREFORE, WAS THAT A BILATERAL DEAL WITH MOROCCO WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION. SPAIN COULD NOT RISK LOSING A COOPERATIVE FRIEND IN ALGERIA WITHOUT BEING SURE THAT IT HAD REACHED A BINDING AGREEMENT PROVIDING FOR RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS WITH MOROCCO. THE GOS OF COURSE WANTED THE SAHARAN ISSUE RESOLVED WITHIN THE UN FRAMEWORK AND WOULD COOPERATE WITH ALMOST ANY SOLUTION WHICH WAS CONSISTENT WITH UN RESOLUTIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE DIRECTOR SAID, THE MFA WAS WELL AWARE THAT MOROCCAN NON-COMPLIANCE WITH UN RESOLUTIONS ON THE DECOLONIZATION OF THE SAHARA WAS NO MORE REPREHENSIBLE THAN UK NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE DECOLON-

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IZATION RESOLUTION ON GIBRALTAR. ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTOR, IF THE MAJOR COUNTRIES DID NOT RESPECT UN RESOLUTIONS THEY COULD HARDLY EXPECT THE LESSER ONES TO SET AN EXAMPLE OF COMPLIANCE.

5. THIS DISCUSSION - AND AN EARLIER DISCUSSION WITH THE DIRGEN OF AFRICA, NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST - REFLECTS AN ATTITUDE WITHIN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT IS NOT ALTOGETHER CONSISTENT WITH THE OFFICIAL GOS POLICY.

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